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ABSTRACT

To assist the youthful learner of English as a second language in dealing with handling urban public transportation, a series of dialogs, comprehension questions, readings, and points of discussion are presented. The text is illustrated. (JB)

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STUDENT LESSON #4

GETTING AROUND
UNIT I
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

English for Living

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OBJECTIVES

When you finish this module you will be able to:

1. Ask the appropriate questions to find out information on bus schedules and ticket prices.
2. Buy a ticket.
3. Take a taxi.

PART I
LOCAL TRANSPORTATION*

SITUATION SETTER

Most cities in America have public bus transportation. Buses are an easy and inexpensive way to get from one place to another within the city. In most places bus stops have signs which say BUS STOP or have a picture of a bus. You can get on a bus at any bus stop. There are often many different buses which go many different routes. You must make sure you get on the right bus. You can ask the bus driver for help if you are not sure. It is also possible to call the company for information about bus schedules.

Remember to have exact change or a bus token when you get on the bus. The bus driver will not give you change. In most buses you drop your fare into a fare box in the front of the bus when you get on.

When you are near the place where you want the bus driver to stop, you must pull the string for the bell to ring. This tells the bus driver that you want to get off at the next stop.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What is an inexpensive way to travel within a city?
2. What are bus stops? How do you know where they are?
3. How can you find out which bus to take?
4. What must you have in order to pay the bus fare?
5. Where do you drop your fare?
6. How do you tell the bus driver you want to get off at the next stop?

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* Important words for this lesson:

Bus stop — a place where the bus stops so people can get on or off.

Bus route — the roads that the bus travels on.

Bus token — a special coin which you can use only on the bus or subway. You can buy tokens in a bank, or at the bus station.

Bus fare — price of the bus ride.

Exact change — the correct amount of money needed to ride on the bus.

Fare box — the place where you put your fare. It is located in the front of the bus, next to the driver.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever taken a city bus? Did you have any problems?
2. Is there a bus stop near your house? Where is it?
3. How did you travel in the city in your country?

DIALOG

Val wants to take a city bus to the post office. He's not sure which bus to take.

Val: Does this bus go to the post office?
Bus Driver: No, it doesn't. You want the number 10 bus.
Val: Does it stop here?
Bus Driver: Yes, it does.
Val: How often does the bus run?
Bus Driver: Every half hour.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Where is Val going?
2. How is he going to get there?
3. Does he know which bus to take?
4. How does he find out?
5. What bus goes to the post office?
6. How often does it run?
7. Does Val have to go to a different bus stop?

MICROCONVERSATIONS: Practice the following conversations with another student.

If you don't know which bus to take, you can always ask the bus driver for help.

MICROCONVERSATION 1

Student A: Does this bus stop at City Hall?
go to the post office?
go to State Street?

Student B: Yes, it does.
No, it doesn't. You want the number 10 bus.
Park Avenue bus.

MICROCONVERSATION 2

Student A: Which bus do I take to go to City Hall?
the post office?
the Mall?

Student B: Take the number 8 bus.

Student A: Does it stop here?
at the next bus stop?

Student B: Yes, it does.
No, it doesn't. It stops on State Street.
over there.

MICROCONVERSATION 3

Student A: How often does the number 8 bus run?
come by?

Student B: Every half hour.
hour on the hour.
ten minutes.

MICROCONVERSATION 4

Student A: Where can I catch the bus?
number 10 bus?
bus to Smith's store?

Student B: Over there.
At the corner of State and Lark.
Across the street.

MICROCONVERSATION 5

Student A: Is this where I get off for City Hall?
Smith's store?

Student B: Yes, it is.
No, it isn't.

MICROCONVERSATION 6

Student A: Where do I catch the bus back?

Student B: Right here.
On the other side of the street.
Over there.
On the opposite corner.

READING: TRANSFERS

Sometimes you have to take more than one bus to get where you are going. Bus companies give transfers. A transfer is a piece of paper that you give to the second bus driver instead of giving him money. Transfers are usually free. If you have to change buses, you should ask your bus driver about a transfer.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What is a transfer?
2. When do you use a transfer?
3. How do you get a transfer?
4. Do you have to pay for a transfer?

MINI-DIALOG

Tanya is going to Smith's store. She needs to change buses.

Tanya: How do I get to Smith's store?

Bus Driver: Take this bus to State Street, and change to the number 10 bus.

Tanya: Thanks. May I have a transfer, please?

Bus Driver: Here you are.

READING: SOME OTHER FORMS OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

There are other forms of public transportation. Large cities such as New York and Boston have subways. Subways are special trains which run underground. Subways usually cost the same as buses. They are faster than buses.

Almost every city in America has taxis. Taxis are special cars which take people from one place to another. You must pay to ride in a taxi. Taxis are very useful when you have baggage or packages. Taxis are more expensive than buses or subways. The price you must pay is shown on the meter in the front of the taxi. The meter is next to the taxi driver. Usually, in the United States, you tip the taxi driver about 15 percent of the fare.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some other kinds of public transportation.
2. What is a subway?
3. What is a taxi?
4. How do you know how much to pay the taxi driver?
5. How much should you tip the taxi driver?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. If you had a lot of packages, would it be easier to take a taxi, a bus or a subway? Why?
2. Do people use taxis in your country? Are they expensive?
3. Do you have subways in your country? Did you ever ride on one?

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DIALOG 1

Val wants to go to the train station. He has a lot of baggage, so he decided to take a taxi. He went to the taxi stand in front of his hotel.

Taxi Driver: Where to?
Val: The train station, please.
Taxi Driver: Which one?
Val: Grand Central Station.

MICROCONVERSATION: Practice this conversation with another student.

Student A: Where to?
do you want to go?
are you going?

Student B: The railroad station, please.
bus terminal,
airport,
22 Central Avenue,

DIALOG 2

If you need to take a taxi, you can also call a taxi company on the telephone. The taxi will pick you up and take you where you want to go.

Voice: Metroland Taxi Service.

Ivan: Would you please send a taxi to 849 Pine Street?

Voice: Where are you going?

Ivan: 928 Hackett Boulevard.

Voice: It'll be there soon, in about 15 minutes.

Ivan: Thank you.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Who is Ivan calling?
2. Why is he calling?
3. Where does Ivan want the taxi to pick him up?
4. Where is he going?
5. Will the taxi arrive soon? When?

ROLE PLAY

Practice this dialog with another student using addresses of your friends, and your own address.

PART II
LONG DISTANCE TRANSPORTATION

READING: LONG DISTANCE TRANSPORTATION

There are buses or trains going to almost every town and city in America.

BUSES

Long distance buses usually have air conditioning, a rest room, and a special group seat for people who want to smoke. On long trips, the buses usually stop every four hours. Usually you cannot reserve a seat on a bus. You can buy your ticket in advance, or just before you leave. If you want to know what times the buses run, you can go to the bus station and get a bus schedule. You can also telephone for information. You can find the telephone number by looking it up in the Yellow Pages of the telephone book under BUS LINES.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What are long distance buses like?
2. When do you buy your ticket?
3. How can you find out when the bus leaves?

DIALOG

Tanya wants to go to New York City to visit her friend. She is at the ticket window in the bus station.

Tanya: When does the next bus for New York City leave?

Clerk: It leaves at 11:30.

Tanya: I'd like a round trip ticket to New York City, please.

Clerk: That'll be $13.45.

Tanya: Do I have to change buses?

Clerk: No, it's direct to New York City.

MICROCONVERSATION 1: Practice these conversations with another student.

Student A: When's the next bus to New York City?
Buffalo?
Montreal?
Boston?
Philadelphia?
Washington, D.C.?
Rochester?

Student B: It leaves at 3:30 p.m.
10:00 a.m.
noon.
2:15 p.m.
8:30 a.m.
midnight.
5:00 p.m.

MICROCONVERSATION 2

Student A: How much is a one-way ticket to Boston?
round trip ticket to Washington, D.C.?
one-way ticket to Buffalo?
round trip ticket to Montreal?

Student B: It's $11.00.
$30.00.
$18.00.
$25.00.

TRAINS

Trains usually have air conditioning, rest rooms, and cars* where you can smoke. They also have a snack bar. A snack bar is a place where you can buy alcoholic drinks, soft drinks, coffee, sandwiches and other snacks. Some trains have special cars with beds. These are called sleeping cars or Pullman cars. Reservations are usually necessary if you want a bed in a Pullman car. You can telephone the railroad station for information about fares and schedules. You can find the telephone number in the Yellow Pages, under RAILROADS.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What are trains like?
2. What is a snack bar?
3. What is a Pullman car?
4. How can you find out how much a train ticket costs, and when the train leaves?

MICROCONVERSATION 1: Practice these conversations with another student.

Student A: When does the train leave for Boston, today?
New York City,
Chicago,

Student B: There's one at 10:00 a.m. and one at 2:15 p.m.
8:15 a.m. 3:00 p.m.
7:45 a.m. 4:50 p.m.

MICROCONVERSATION 2

Student A: I want a round trip ticket to Boston, please.
I'd like a one-way ticket to Washington, D.C.

Student B: That'll be $22.00.
$25.00.

MICROCONVERSATION 3

Student A: Where does the train to Boston leave from?
the train to Washington, D.C. leave from?

Student B: It leaves from track 5.
track 8.

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* Note: Each separate part of a train is called a car.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you use public transportation in America? What kinds of public transportation do you use?
2. Have you ever taken a long distance bus or train? If so, where did you go? What did you like about it? What didn't you like about it?
3. What is the public transportation like in your country?
4. Do many people use public transportation in your country?

ROLE PLAY

You and your friends are going to take a trip. Decide whether you are going to go by train or by bus. Decide where you want to go. One student will be the clerk at the ticket window. The other students will buy the tickets. They will ask the clerk when the train or bus leaves, and how much a ticket costs. They will buy a ticket, and then ask where the train or bus leaves from.